

LEO TOLSTOY

LEO TOLSTOY

BY

G. K. CHESTERTON, G. H. PERRIS
ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
27, PATERNOSTER ROW
1903

PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

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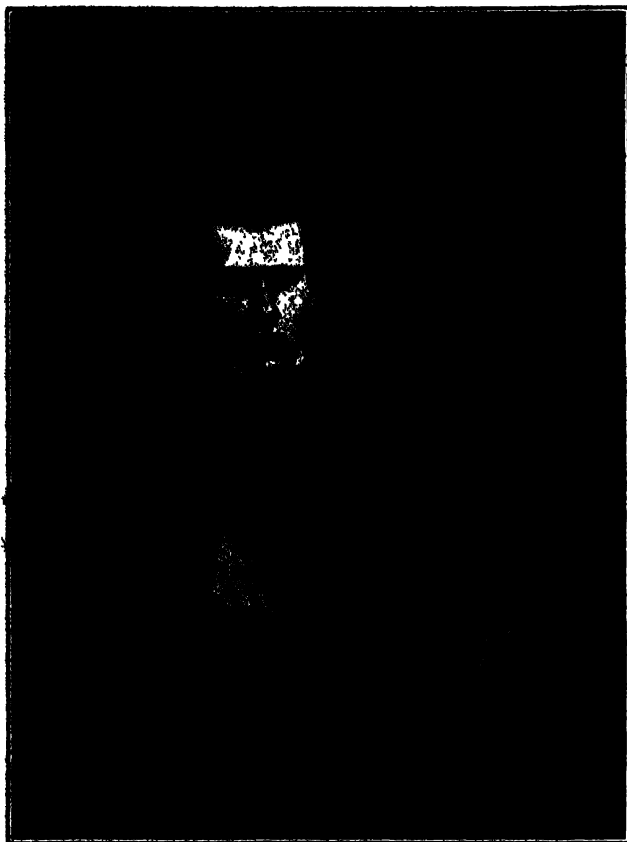
TOLSTOY



TOLSTOY AS AN OFFICER

IF any one wishes to form the fullest estimate of the real character and influence of the great man whose name is prefixed to these remarks, he will not find it in his novels, splendid as they are, or in his ethical views, clearly and finely as they are conceived and expanded. He will find it best expressed in the news that has recently come from Canada, that a sect of Russian Christian anarchists has turned all its animals loose, on the ground that it is immoral to possess them or control them. About such an incident as this there is a quality altogether indepen-

dent of the rightness or wrongness, the sanity or insanity, of the view. It is first and foremost a reminder that the world is still young. There are still theories of life as insanely reasonable as those which were disputed under the clear blue skies of Athens. There are still examples of a faith as fierce and practical as that of the Mahometans, who swept across Africa and Europe, shouting a single word. To the languid contemporary politician and philosopher it seems doubtless like something out of a dream, that in this iron-bound, homogeneous, and clockwork age, a company of European men in boots and waistcoats should begin to insist on taking the horse out of the shafts of the omnibus, and lift the pig out of his pig-sty, and the dog out of his kennel, because of a moral scruple or theory. It is like a page from some fairy farce to imagine the Doukhobor solemnly escorting a hen to the door of the yard and bidding it a benevolent farewell as it sets out on its travels. All this, as I



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TOLSTOY
IN
HIS
STUDENT
DAYS
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say, seems mere muddle-headed absurdity to the typical leader of human society in this decade, to a man like Mr. Balfour, or Mr. Wyndham. But there is nevertheless a further thing to be said, and that is that, if Mr. Balfour could be converted to a religion which taught him that he was morally bound to walk into the House of Commons on his hands, and he did walk on his hands, if Mr. Wyndham could accept a creed which taught that he ought to dye his hair blue, and he did dye his hair blue, they would both of them be, almost beyond description, better and happier men than they are. For there is only one happiness possible or conceivable under the sun, and that is enthusiasm—that strange and splendid



YASNAYA-POLYANA THE COUNTRY HOME OF COUNT TOLSTOY

word that has passed through so many vicissitudes, which meant, in the eighteenth century the condition of a lunatic, and in ancient Greece the presence of a god.

This great act of heroic consistency which has taken place in Canada is the best example of the work of Tolstoy. It is true (as I believe) that the Doukhobors have an origin quite independent of the great Russian moralist, but there can surely be little doubt that their emergence into importance and the growth and mental distinction of their sect, is due to his admirable summary and justification of their scheme of ethics. Tolstoy, besides being a magnificent novelist, is one of the very few men alive who have a real, solid, and serious view of life. He is a Catholic church, of which he is the only member, the somewhat arrogant Pope and the somewhat submissive layman. He is one of the two or three men in Europe, who have an attitude towards things so entirely their own, that we could supply their inevitable view on anything—a silk hat, a Home Rule Bill, an Indian poem, or a pound of tobacco. There are three men in existence who have such an attitude: Tolstoy, Mr. Bernard Shaw, and my friend Mr. Hilaire Belloc. They are all diametrically opposed to each other, but they all have this essential resemblance,

TOLSTOY

that, given their basis of thought, their soil of conviction, their opinions on every earthly subject grow there naturally, like flowers in a field. *There are certain views of certain things that they must take; they do not form opinions, the opinions form themselves.* Take, for instance, in the case of Tolstoy, the mere list of miscellaneous objects which I wrote down at random above, a silk hat, a Home Rule Bill, an Indian poem, and a pound of tobacco. Tolstoy would say: "I believe in the utmost possible simplification of life; therefore, this silk hat is a black abortion." He would say: "I believe in the utmost possible simplification of life; therefore, this Home Rule Bill is a mere peddling compromise; it is no good to break up a centralised empire into nations, you must break the nation up into individuals." He would say: "I believe in the utmost possible simplification of life; therefore, I am interested in this Indian poem, for Eastern ethics, under all their apparent gorgeousness, are far simpler and more Tolstoyan than Western." He would say: "I believe in the utmost possible simplification of life; therefore, this pound of tobacco is a thing of evil; take it away." Everything in the world, from the Bible to a bootjack, can be, and is, reduced by

Tolstoy to this great fundamental Tolstoyan principle, the simplification of life. When we deal with a body of opinion like this we are dealing with an incident in the history of Europe infinitely more important than the appearance of Napoleon Buonaparte.

This emergence of Tolstoy, with his awful and simple ethics, is important in more ways than one. Among other things it is a very interesting commentary on an attitude which has been taken up for the matter of half a century by all the avowed opponents of religion. The secularist and the sceptic have denounced Christianity first and



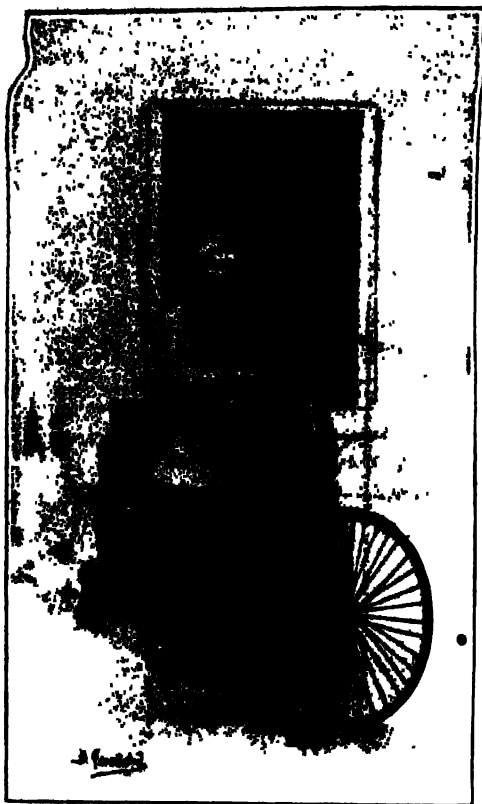
THE APPROACH TO THE PARK AT
YASNAYA POLYANA

foremost, because of its encouragement of fanaticism; because religious excitement led men to burn their neighbours, and to dance naked down the street. How queer it all sounds now.



THE GATEWAY-ENTRANCE TO YASNAYA POLYANA

Religion can be swept out of the matter altogether, and still there are philosophical and ethical theories which can produce fanaticism enough to fill the world. Fanaticism has nothing at all to do with religion. There are grave scientific theories which, if carried out logically, would result in the same fires in the market-place and the same nakedness in the street. There are modern aesthetes who would expose themselves like the Adamites if they could do it in elegant attitudes. There are modern scientific moralists who would burn their opponents alive, and would be quite contented if they were burnt by some new chemical process. And if any one doubts this proposition - that fanaticism has nothing to do with religion, but has only to do with human nature - let him take this case of Tolstoy and the Doukhabors. A sect of men start with no theology at all, but with the simple doctrine that we ought to love our neighbour and use no force against him, and they end in thinking it wicked to carry a leather hand-bag, or to ride in a cart. A great modern writer who crases theology altogether, denies the validity of the Scriptures and the Churches alike, forms a purely ethical theory that love should be the instrument of reform, and ends by maintaining that we have no right to strike a man if he is torturing a child before our eyes. He goes on, he develops a theory of the mind and the emotions, which might be held by the most rigid atheist, and he ends by maintaining that the sexual



TOLSTOY WITH HIS BICYCLE
(Photographed in 1896)

relation out of which all humanity has come, is not only not moral, but is positively not natural. This is fanaticism as it has been and as it will always be. Destroy the last copy of the Bible, and persecution and insane orgies will be founded on Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy." Some of the broadest thinkers of the Middle Ages believed in faggots, and some of the broadest thinkers in the nineteenth century believe in dynamite.

The truth is that Tolstoy, with his immense genius, with his colossal faith, with his vast fearlessness and vast knowledge of life, is deficient in one faculty and one faculty alone. He is not a mystic: and therefore he has a tendency to go mad. Men talk of the extravagances and

frenzies that have been produced by mysticism: they are a mere drop in the bucket. In the main, and from the beginning of time, mysticism has kept men sane. The thing that has driven them mad was logic. It is significant that, with all that has been said about the excitability of poets, only one English poet ever went mad, and he went mad from a logical system of theology. He was Cowper, and his poetry retarded his insanity for many years. So poetry, in which Tolstoy is deficient, has always been a tonic and sanative thing. The only thing that has kept the race of men from the mad extremes of the convent and the pirate-galley, the night-club and the lethal chamber, has been mysticism—the belief that logic is misleading, and that things are not what they seem.

G. K. CHESTERTON.



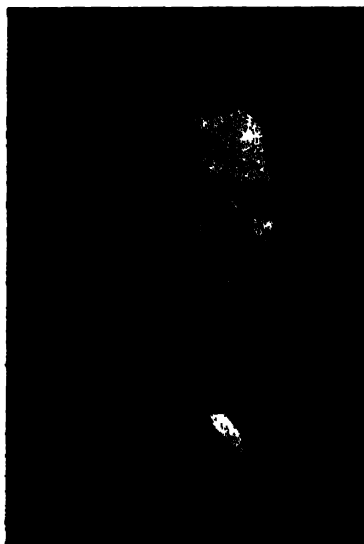
"THE TREE OF THE POOR"

Where Tolstoy receives the peasants and listens with unwearying patience to their tales of distress

LEO TOLSTOY AS WRITER .

HALF the ignorance or misunderstanding of this greatest living figure in literature comes of the attempt to judge him as we judge the specialised Western novelist — an utterly futile method of

approach. He is a Russian, in the first place. Had he come to Paris with Turguenieff, he might have been similarly de-nationalised, might possibly have developed into a writer pure and simple; the world might so have gained a few great romances — it would have lost infinitely in other directions. Turguenieff wished it so. "My friend," he wrote to Tolstoy from his deathbed, "return to literature! Reflect that that gift comes to you whence everything comes to us. Ah! how happy I should be if I could think that my prayer would influence you. . . . My friend, great writer of our Russian land, hear my entreaty!" For



TOLSTOY, AN EARLY PORTRAIT



COUNT
AND
COUNTESS
TOLSTOY

From a
Portrait taken
in
September 1895

(Reproduced
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from
"How Count Tolstoy
Lives and Works,"
by
P. A. Sergeyenko)

once, the second greatest of modern Russians took a narrow view of character and destiny. Genius must work itself out on its own lines. Tolstoy remained a Russian from tip to toe—that is one of his supreme values for us; and he remained an indivisible personality. The artist and the moralist are inseparable in his works. "We are not to take 'Anna Karèнина' as a work of art," said Matthew

Arnold; "we are to take it as a piece of life." The distinction is not very satisfactorily stated, but the meaning is clear. So, too, W. D. Howells, in his introduction to an American edition of the "Sebastopol Sketches": "I do not know how it is with others to whom these books of Tolstoy's have come, but for my part I cannot think of them as literature in the artistic sense at all. Some people complain to me when I praise them that they are too long, too diffuse, too confused, that the characters' names are hard to pronounce, and that the life they portray is very sad and not amusing. In the presence of these criticisms I can only say that I find them nothing of the kind, but that each history of Tolstoy's is as clear, as orderly, as brief, as something I have lived through myself. . . . I cannot think of any service which imaginative literature has done the race, so great as

that which Tolstoy has done in his conception of Karènnina at that crucial moment when the cruelly outraged man sees that he cannot be good with dignity. This leaves all tricks of fancy, all effects of art, immeasurably behind." So much being said, however, we may be allowed to emphasise in this small space the great qualities and achievements of Tolstoy as artist, rather than the expositions of Christian Anarchism and the social philippics



LEO TOLSTOY, FROM A SKETCH BY VICTOR PROUT
(Reproduced by kind permission of Mr. F. K. Henderson)



COUNT TOLSTOY AT WORK IN THE FIELDS

under which those achievements have been somewhat hidden in recent years.

Morbid introspectiveness and the spirit of revolt inevitably colour what is best in nineteenth-century Russia. Born at Yasnaya Polyana ("Clear Field"), Tula, in 1828, and early orphaned, Tolstoy's youth

FACSIMILE OF A PORTION OF TOLSTOY'S MS.

(Reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Nisbet & Co. from "How Count Tolstoy Lived and Worked,"
by P. A. Sergeyenko)

synchronised with the period of reaction that brought the Empire to the humiliating disasters of the Crimean War. No hope was left in the thin layer of society lying between the two mill-stones of the Court and the serfs; none in the little sphere of art where Byronic romanticism was ready to expire. The boy saw from the first the rottenness of the patriarchal aristocracy in which his lot seemed to be cast. Precocious, abnormally sensitive and observant, impatient of discipline and formal learning, awkward and bashful, always brooding, not a little conceited, he was a sceptic at fifteen, and left the University of Kazan in disgust at the stupid conventions of the time and place, without taking his degree. "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth"—which appeared in three sections between 1852 and 1857—tells the story of this period, though the figure of Irtenieff is probably a projection rather than a portrait of himself, to whom he is always less fair, not to say merciful, than to others. This book is a most uncompromising exercise in self-analysis. It is of great length, there is no plot, and few outer events are recorded.

The realism is generally morbid, but is varied by some passages of great descriptive power, such as the account of the storm, and occasionally with tender pathos, as in the story of the soldier's death, as well as by grimly vivid pages, such as the narrative of the mother's death. In this earliest work will be found the seeds both of Tolstoy's artistic genius and of his ethical gospel.

After five years of mildly benevolent efforts among his serfs at Yasnaya Polyana (the disappointments of which he related a few years later in "A Landlord's Morning," intended to have been part

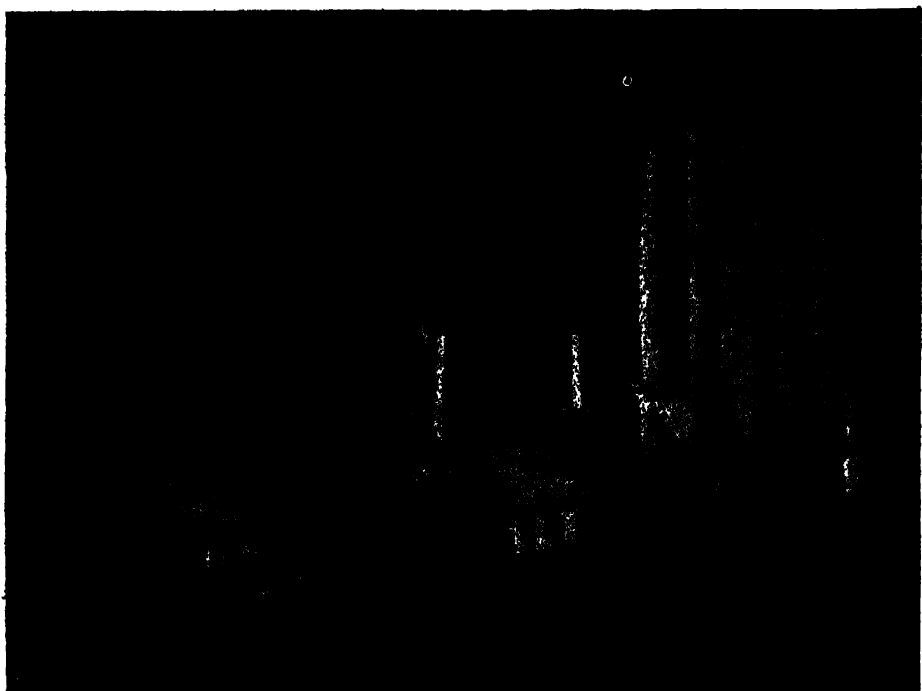
of a full novel to be called "A Russian Proprietor"), his elder brother Nicholas persuaded him to join the army, and in 1851 he was drafted to the Caucasus as an artillery officer. On this favourite stage of classic Russian romance, where for the first time he saw the towering mountains and the tropical sun, and met the rugged adventurous highlanders, Tolstoy felt his imagination stirred as Byron among the isles of Greece, and his early revulsion against city life confirmed as Wordsworth amid the Lakes, as Thoreau at Walden, by a direct call from Nature to his own heart. The largest result of this experience was "The Cossacks" (1852). Turguenieff described this fine prose epic of the contact of civilised and savage man as "the best novel written in our language." "The Raid" (or "The Invaders," as Mr. Dole's translation is entitled), dating from the same year, "The Wood-Cutting Expedition" (1855), "Meeting an Old Acquaintance" (1856), and "A



COUNT TOLSTOY, HIS WIFE, AND
DAUGHTERS



TOLSTOY AT WORK IN HIS STUDIO AT YASNAJA POLYANA



TOLSTOY WRITING AT HIS DESK

Prisoner in the Caucasus" (1862) are also drawn from recollections of this sojourn, and show the same descriptive and romantic power. Upon the outbreak of the Crimean War the Count was called to Sebastopol, where he had command of a battery, and took part in the defence of the citadel. The immediate product of these dark months of bloodshed was the thrilling series of impressions reprinted from one of the leading Russian reviews as "Sebastopol Sketches" (1856). From that day onward Tolstoy knew and told the hateful truth about war and the thoughtless pseudo-patriotism which hurries nations into fratricidal slaughter. From that day there was expunged from his mind all the cheap romanticism which depends upon the glorification of the savage side of human nature. These wonderful pictures of the routine of the battlefield established his position in Russia as a writer, and later on created in Western countries an impression like that of the canvases of Verestchagin.

For a brief time Tolstoy became a figure in the old and new capitals of Russia by right of talent as well as birth. His very chequered friendship with Turgueniëff, one of the oddest chapters in literary history, can only be mentioned here. In 1857 he travelled in Germany, France, and Italy. It was of these years that he declared in "My Confession" that he could not think of them without horror, disgust, and pain of heart. The catalogue of crime which he charged against himself in his salvationist crisis of twenty years later must not be taken literally; but that there was some ground for it we may guess from the scenic and incidental realism of the "Recollections of a Billiard Marker" (1856), and of many a later page. Several other powerful short novels date from about this time, including "Albert" and "Lucerne," both of which remind us of the Count's susceptibility to music; "Polikushka," a tale of peasant life; and "Family Happiness," the story of a marriage that failed, a most clear, consistent, forceful, and in parts beautiful piece of work, anticipating in essentials "The Kroutzer Sonata" that was to scandalise the world thirty years afterward.

After all, it was family happiness that saved Leo Tolstoy. For the third time the hand of death had snatched away one of the nearest to him—his brother Nicholas. Two years later, in 1862, he married Miss Behrs, daughter of the army surgeon in Tula—the most fortunate thing that has happened to him in his whole life, I should think. Family responsibilities, those novel and daring experiments in peasant education which are recorded in several volumes of the highest interest, the supervision of the estate, magisterial



One of H. R. Millar's illustrations in the English edition of "Where Love is, there God is also," reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Walter Scott, Ltd., the publishers



COUNT TOLSTOY

work, and last, but not least, the prolonged labours upon "War and Peace" and "Anna Karèнина" fill up the next fifteen years. "War and Peace" (1864-9) is a huge panorama of the Napoleonic campaign of 1812, with preceding and succeeding episodes in Russian society. These four volumes display in their superlative degree Tolstoy's indifference to plot and his absorption in individual character; they are rather a series of scenes threaded upon the fortunes of several families than a set novel; but they contain passages of

penetrating psychology and vivid description, as well as a certain amount of anarchist theorising. Of this work, by which its author became known in the West, Flaubert (how the name carries us backward!) wrote: "It is of the first order. What a painter and what a psychologist! The two first volumes are sublime, but the third drags frightfully. There are some quite Shakespearean things in it." The artist's hand was now strengthening for his highest attainment. In 1876 appeared "Anna Karèнина," his greatest, and as he intended at the time (but Art is not so easily jilted), his *last novel*. The fine qualities of this book, which, though long, is



A FAMOUS PAINTING OF TOLSTOY

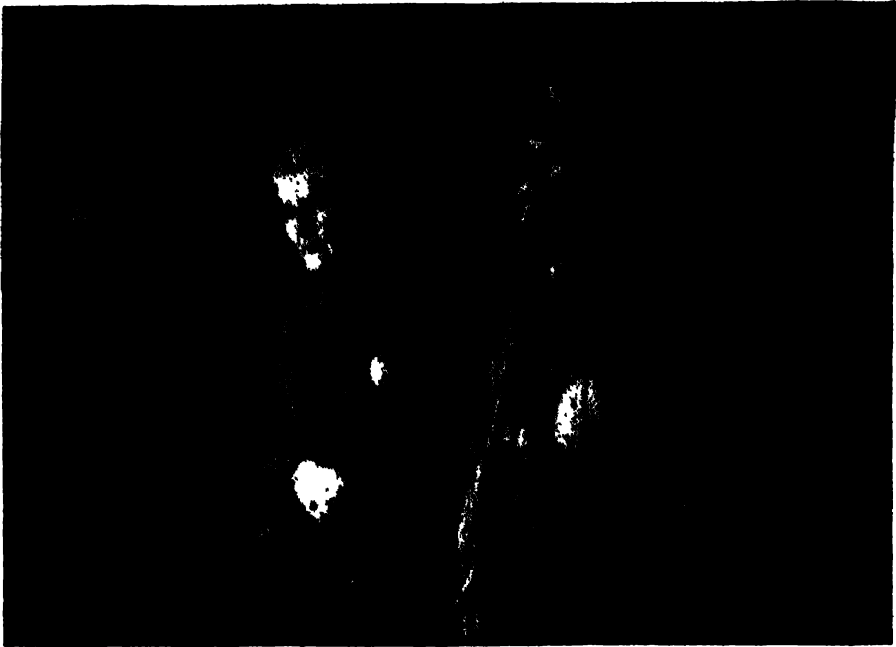
dramatically unified and vitally coherent, have been so fully recognised that I need not attempt to describe them. Mr. George Meredith has described Anna as "the most perfectly depicted female character in all fiction," which, from the author of "*Diana*,"



PHOTOGRAPH
OF
COUNT TOLSTOY
TAKEN AT
YASNAYA POLYANA

(Reproduced
from "Anna Karenina"
by kind permission
of
Messrs. Walter Scott Ltd.)

is praise indeed. Parallel with the main subject of the illicit love of Anna and Vronsky there is a minor subject in the fortunes of Levin and Kitty, wherein the reader will discover many of Tolstoy's own experiences. Matthew Arnold complained that the book contained too many characters and a burdensome multiplicity of actions, but praised its author's extraordinarily fine perception and no less extraordinary truthfulness, and frankly revelled in Anna's

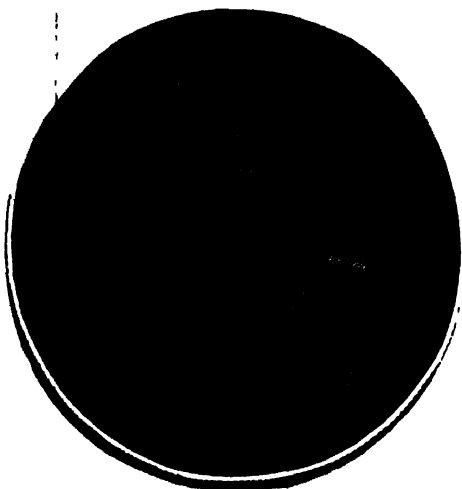


RUSSIAN JAILER AND WOMAN WARDER

"The jailer, rattling the iron padlock, opened the door of the cell"

(From an illustration by Pasternak in the English Edition of "Resurrection," reproduced by kind permission of Mr J. R. Henderson)

"large, fresh, rich, generous, delightful nature." "When I had ended my work 'Anna Karenina,' said Tolstoy in "My Confession" (1879-82), "my despair reached such a height that I could do nothing but think of the horrible condition in which I found myself. . . . I saw only one thing—Death. Everything else was a lie." Of that spiritual crisis nothing need be said here except that it only intensified, and did not really, as it seemed to do, vitally change, principles and instincts which had possessed Tolstoy from the beginning. His subsequent ethical and religious development may be traced in a long series of books and pamphlets, of which the most important are "The Gospels Translated, Compared, and Harmonised" (1880-2), "What I Believe" ["My Religion"], produced abroad in 1884, "What is to be Done?" (1884-5), "Life" (1887), "Work" (1888), "The Kingdom of God is Within You" (1893), "Non-Action" (1894), "Patriotism and Christianity" (1896)—



A TOLSTOY MEDALLION

crusade, in the foreign and the clandestine presses at least, against all Imperial authority and social maladjustments. Mr. Tchertkoff, Mr. Aylmer Maude, the "Brotherhood Publishing Co.," and the "Free Age Press" deserve praise for their efforts to popularise these and other works of the Count in thoroughly good translations. In "What is Art?" (1898), not content with the bare utilitarian argument that it is merely a means of social union, he launched a *jehad* against all modern ideas of Art which rely upon a conception of beauty and all ideas of beauty into which pleasure enters as a leading constituent. A short but luminous essay on "Guy de Maupassant and the Art of Fiction" is a

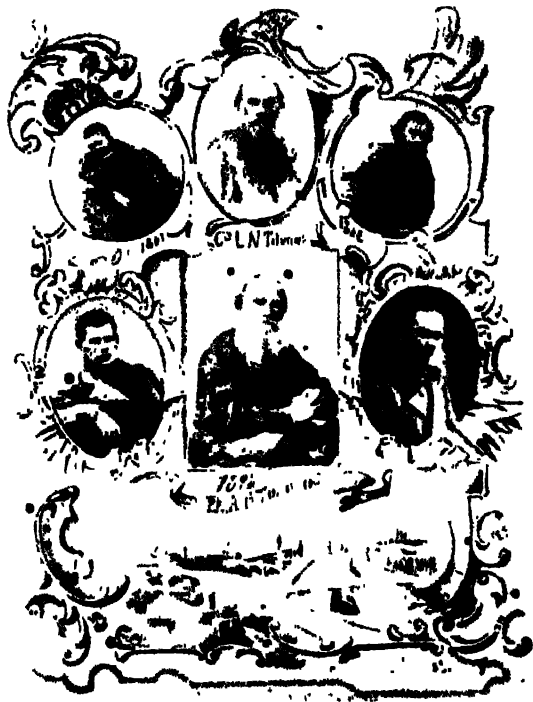
a scathing attack upon militarism in general and the Franco-Russian Alliance in particular—"The Christian Teaching" (1898), and "The Slavery of our Times" (1900). Various letters on the successive famines and on the religious persecutions in Russia deserve separate mention; they remind us that since the failure of the revolutionary movement miscalled "Nihilism," Tolstoy has gradually risen to the position of the one man who can continue with impunity a public



THE COVER OF THE TRACT "WHERE LOVE IS, THERE GOD IS ALSO"

more satisfactory contribution to the subject.

It is more to our purpose to note that in this volcanic and fecund if fundamentally simple personality the artist has dogged the steps of the evangelist to the last. "Master and Man" (1895) is one of the most exquisite short stories ever written. "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch" (1884) and "Resurrection" (1899) are in some ways the most powerful of all his works. The much-condemned "Do-



ONE OF THE POSTCARDS ISSUED IN MOSCOW IN 1899 TO
COMMEMORATE TOLSTOY'S LITERARY JUBILEE

minion of Darkness" (1886) and "Kreutzer Sonata" (1889) will be more fairly judged when the average Englishman has learned the supreme merit of that uncompromising truthfulness which gives nobility to every line the grand Russian ever wrote. To submit a work like "Resurrection" to the summary treatment which the ordinary novel receives and merits is absurd. It is a large picture of the fall and rise of man done by the swift and restless hand of a master who stands in a category apart, with an eye that sees externals and essentials with like accuracy and rapidity. Because the dramatic quality of these living pictures lies, not in their organisation into a conventionally limited plot, but first in the challenging idea upon which they are founded, then the inexorable development of individual characters, and ever and anon in the grip of particular episodes, the little critics scoff. The idea, the characters, the episodes are all too real and vital for their precious British self-complacency. The grandmotherly *Athenæum*



permits some person to describe this Promethean figure as "a precious vase that has been broken," and can now only be pieced together to make "the ornament of a museum,"—which reminds me that I heard a lecturer before a well-known literary society in London describe him

lately as a "scavenger," and that a city bookseller assured me the other day that there was something almost amounting to a boycott against his fiction in the shops. The publisher who is preparing a complete edition of Tolstoy—enormous work!—knows better, knows that Tolstoy is one of the world-spirits whose advance out of the



TWO OF THE POSTCARDS ISSUED AT MOSCOW
IN 1898 TO COMMEMORATE TOLSTOY'S
LITERARY JUBILEE

obscurity of a benighted land into the largest contemporary circulation is but a foretaste of an influence that will soon be co-extensive with the commonwealth of thinking men and women.

His service to literature is precisely the same as his service to morals. Like Bunyan and Burns, Dickens and Whitman, he throws down in a world of decadent conventions the gauge of the democratic ideal. As he calls the politician and the social reformer back to the land and the common people, so he calls the artist back to the elemental forces ever at work beneath the surface-show of nature and humanity. With an extraordinary penetration into the hidden recesses of character, he joins a terrible truthfulness, and that absolute



COUNT TOLSTOY
AT REST.

From a Painting
by Repin.

(Reproduced by kind
permission from
"How Tolstoy Lives
and Works,"
by
P. A. Sergeyenko)



TOLSTOY IN THE GROUNDS OF
YASNAYA POLYANA

simplicity of manner which we generally associate with genius. He is a realist, not merely of the outer, but more especially of the inner life. There is no staginess, no sentimentality, in his work. He has no heroes in our Western sense, none, even, of those sensational types of personality which glorify the name of his Northern contemporary, Ibsen. His style is always natural, direct, irresistible as a physical process. He has rarely strayed beyond the channel of his own experience, and the reader who prefers breadth to depth of knowledge must seek elsewhere. He has little humour, but a grimly satiric note has sometimes crept into his writing, as Archdeacon Farrar will remember. Of artifice designed for vulgar entertainment he knows nothing; in the world of true art, which is the wine-press of the soul of man, he stands, a princely figure. Theories, prescriptions, and discussions are forgotten, and we think only with love and reverence of this modern patriarch, so lonely amid the daily enlarging congregation of the hearts he has awakened to a sense of the mystery, the terror, the joy, the splendour of human destinies.

G. H. PERRIS.

TOLSTOY'S PLACE IN EUROPEAN LITERATURE

THE justness of the word *great* applied to a nation's writers is perhaps best tested by simply taking each writer in turn from out his Age, and seeing how far our conception of his Age remains unaffected. We may take away hundreds of clever writers,



One of H. R. Millar's illustrations in the English edition of "What Men Live By" (written in 1881), reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Walter Scott, Ltd., the publishers

scores of distinguished creators, and the Age remains before our eyes, solidly unaffected by their absence ; but touch one or two central figures, and lo ! the whole framework of the Age gives in your hands, and you realise that the World's insight into, and understanding of that Age's life has been supplied us by the special interpretation offered by two or three great minds. In fact, every Age seems dwarfed, chaotic, full of confused tendencies and general contradiction till the few great men have arisen, and symbolised in themselves what their nation's growth or strife *signifies*. How many dumb ages are there in which no great writer has appeared, ages, to whose inner life in consequence we have no key !

Tolstoy's significance as the great writer of modern Russia can scarcely be augmented in Russian eyes by his exceeding significance to Europe as symbolising the spiritual unrest of the modern world. Yet so inevitably

TOLSTOY



ONE
OF THE
MOST
STRIKING
OF THE
MANY
BUSTS OF
COUNT
TOLSTOY

must the main stream of each age's tendency and the main movement of the world's thought be discovered for us by the great writers, whenever they appear, that Russia can no more keep Tolstoy's significance to herself than could Germany keep Goethe's to herself. True it is that Tolstoy, as great novelist, has been absorbed in mirroring the peculiar world of half-feudal, modern



From Photo by]

A RECENT PORTRAIT OF COUNT TOLSTOY

(Rek Matild, Zsolna

Russia, a world strange to Western Europe, but the spirit of analysis with which the creator of "Anna Karènina" and "War and Peace" has confronted the modern world is more truly representative of our Age's outlook than is the spirit of any other of his great contemporaries. Between the days of "Wilhelm Meister" and of "Resurrection" what an extraordinary volume of the rushing tide of modern life has swept by! A century of that "liberation of modern Europe from the old routine" has passed since Goethe stood forth for "the awakening of the modern spirit." A century of emancipation, of Science, of unbelief, of incessant shock, change, and Progress all over the face of Europe, and even as Goethe a hundred years ago typified the triumph of the new intelligence of Europe over the shackles of its old institutions, routine, and dogma (as Matthew Arnold affirms), so Tolstoy to-day stands for the triumph of the European *soul* against civilisation's routine and dogma. The peculiar modernness of Tolstoy's attitude, however, as we shall presently show, is that he is inspired largely by the modern scientific spirit in his searching analysis of modern life. Apparently at war with Science and Progress, his extraordinary fascination for the mind of Europe lies in the fact that he of all great contemporary writers has come nearest to demonstrating, to *realising* what the life of the modern man *is*. He of all the analysts of the civilised man's thoughts, emotions, and actions has least idealised, least beautified, and least distorted the complex daily life of the European world. With a marked moral bias, driven onward in his search for truth by his passionate religious temperament, Tolstoy, in his pictures of life, has constructed a truer *whole*, a human world less bounded by the artist's individual limitations, more mysteriously living in its vast flux and flow than is the world of any writer of the century. "War and Peace" and "Anna Karènina," those great worlds where the physical environment, mental outlook, emotional aspiration, and moral code of the whole community of Russia are reproduced by his art, as some mighty cunning phantasmagoria of changing life, are superior in the sense of containing a whole nation's life, to the worlds of Goethe, Byron, Scott, Victor Hugo, Balzac, Dickens, Thackeray, Maupassant, or any latter day creator we can name.



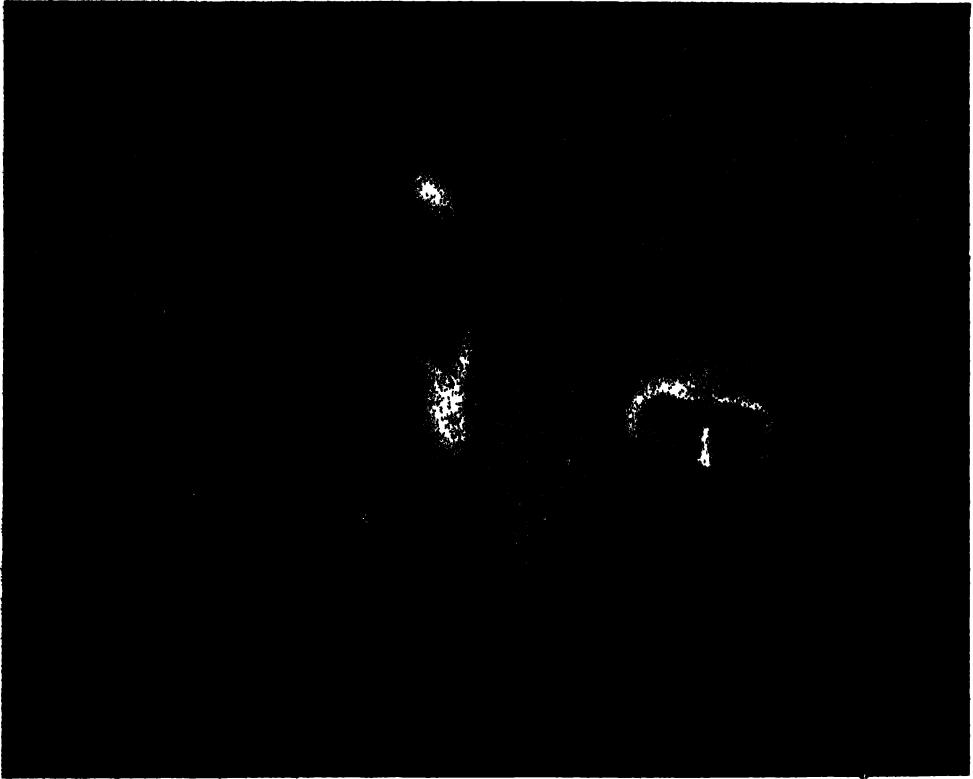
THE
DEFENDANTS

"The third prisoner
was Maslova"

(from an illustration
by Pasternak
in the
English Edition of
"Resurrection,"
reproduced by
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Mr. F. R.
Henderson)

And not only so, but Tolstoy's analysis of life throws more light on the main currents of thought in our Age, raises deeper problems, and explores more untouched territories of the mind than does any corresponding analysis by his European contemporaries.

It is by Tolstoy's passionate seeking of the life of the soul that the



TOLSTOY AND HIS DAUGHTER TATYANA

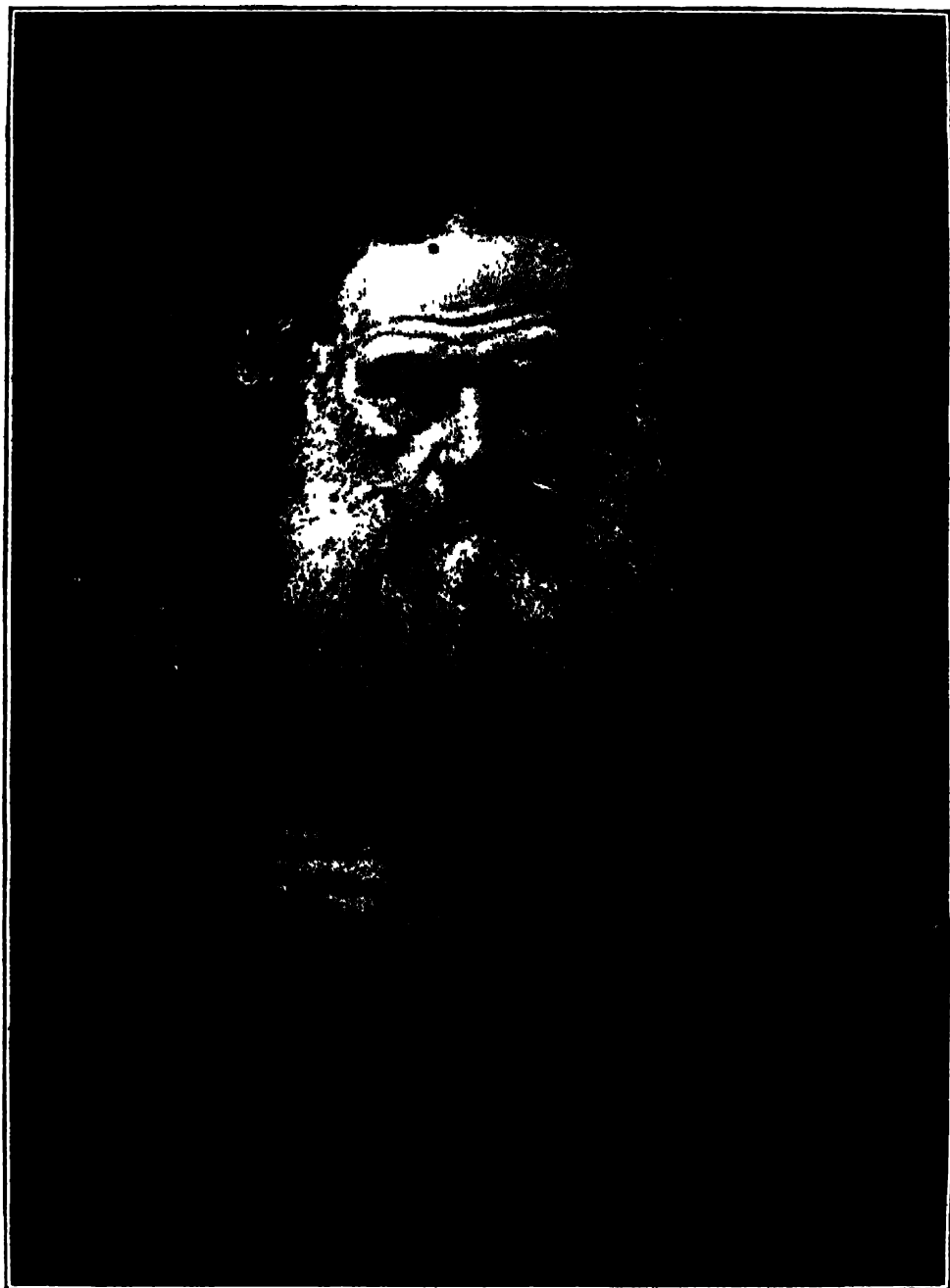
great Russian writer towers above the men of our day, and it is because his hunger for spiritual truth has led him to probe contemporary life, to examine all modern formulas and appearances, to penetrate into the secret thought and emotion of men of all grades in our complex society, that his work is charged with the essence of nearly all that modernity thinks and feels, believes and suffers, hopes and fears as it evolves in more and more complex forms of our terribly complex civilisation. The soul of humanity is, however, always the appeal of men from the life that environs, moulds, and burdens them, to instincts that go beyond and transcend their present life. Tolstoy is the *appeal* of the modern world, the cry of the modern conscience against the blinded fate of its own *progress*. To the eye of science everything is possible in human life, the sacrifice of the innocent for the sake of the progress of the guilty,

COUNT TOLSTOY AND HIS FAMILY

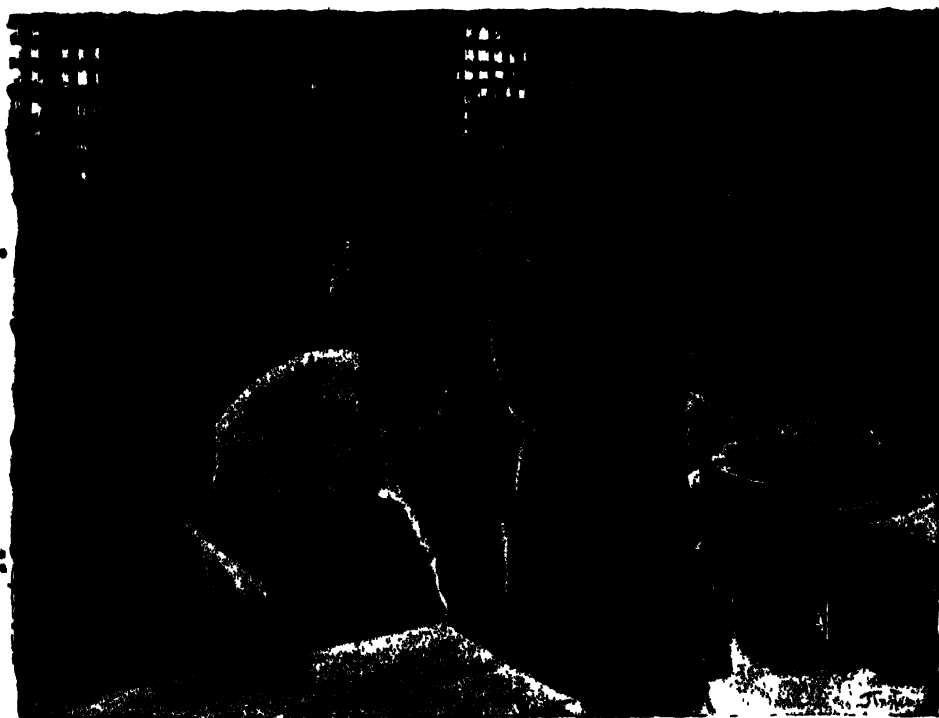
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the crushing and deforming of the weak so that the strong may triumph over them, the evolution of new serf classes at the dictates of a ruling class. All this the nineteenth century has seen accomplished, and not seen alone in Russia. It is Tolstoy's distinction to have combined in his life-work more than any other great artist two main conflicting points of view. He has fused by his art the science that defines *the way* Humanity is forced forward blindly and irresponsibly from century to century by the mere pressure of events, he has fused with this science of our modern world the soul's protest against the earthly fate of man which leads the generations into taking the ceaseless roads of evil which every age unwinds.

Let us cite Tolstoy's treatment of War as an instance of how this great artist symbolises the Age for us, and so marks the advance in self-consciousness of the modern mind, and as a nearer approximation to a realisation of what life is. We have only got to compare Tolstoy's "Sebastopol" (1856) with any other document on war by other European writers to perceive that Tolstoy alone among artists has *realised* war, his fellows have *idealised* it. To quote a passage from a former article let us say that "Sebastopol" gives us war under *all* aspects—war as a squalid, honourable, daily affair of mud and glory, of vanity, disease, hard work, stupidity, patriotism, and inhuman agony. Tolstoy gets the complex effects of 'Sebastopol' by keenly analysing the effect of the sights and sounds, dangers and pleasures, of war on the brains of a variety of typical men, and by placing a special valuation of his own on these men's actions, thoughts, and emotions, on their courage, altruism, and show of indifference in the face of death. He lifts up, in fact, the veil of appearances conventionally drawn by society over the actualities of the glorious trade of killing men, and he does this chiefly by analysing keenly the insensitiveness and indifference of the average mind, which says of the worst of war's realities, 'I felt so and so, and did so and so: but as to what those other thousands may have felt in their agony, that I did not enter into at all.' 'Sebastopol,' therefore, though an exceedingly short and exceedingly simple narrative, is a psychological document on modern war of extraordinary value, for it simply



LEO TOLSTOY, FROM A PORTRAIT PAINTED IN 1884



MASLOVA'S RETURN TO THE WARD AFTER THE SENTENCE

"She could bear it no longer, her face quivered and she burst into sobs."

(From an illustration by Pasternak in the English Edition of "Resurrection" reproduced by kind permission of Mr F. R. Henderson)

relegates to the lumber-room, as unlife-like and hopelessly limited, all those theatrical glorifications of war which men of letters, romantic poets, and grave historians alike have been busily piling up on humanity's shelves from generation to generation. And more: we feel that in 'Sebastopol' we have at last the sceptical modern spirit, absorbed in actual life, demonstrating what war is, and expressing at length the confused sensations of countless men, who have heretofore never found a genius who can make humanity realise what it knows half-consciously and consciously evades. We cannot help, therefore, recognising this man Tolstoy as the most advanced product of our civilisation, and likening him to a great surgeon, who, not deceived by the world's presentation of its own life, penetrates into the essential joy and suffering, health and disease of multitudes of men; a surgeon who, face to face with the strangest of Nature's laws in the

constitution of human society, puzzled by all the illusions, fatuities, and conventions of the human mind, resolutely sets himself to lay bare the roots of all its passions, appetites, and incentives in the struggle for life, so that at least human reason may advance farther along the path of self-knowledge in advancing towards a general sociological study of man."

Tolstoy's place in nineteenth-century literature is, therefore, in our view, no less fixed and certain than is Voltaire's place in the eighteenth century. Both of these writers focus for us in

a marvellously complete manner the respective methods of analysing life by which the rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the science and humanitarianism of the nineteenth century have moulded for us the modern world. All the movements, all the problems, all the speculation, all the agitations of the world of to-day in contrast with the immense materialistic civilisation that science has hastily built up for us in three or four generations, all the *spirit* of modern life is condensed in the pages of Tolstoy's writings, because, as we have said, he typifies the soul of the modern man gazing, now undaunted, and now in alarm, at the formidable array



LEO TOLSTOY, 1896
(From a Photograph)

of the newly-tabulated *cause and effect* of humanity's progress, at the appalling cheapness and waste of human life in Nature's hands. Tolstoy thus stands for *the modern soul's alarm in contact with science*. And just as science's *work* after its first destruction of the past ages' formalism, superstition, and dogma is directed more and more to the examination and amelioration of human life, so Tolstoy's work has been throughout inspired by a passionate love of humanity. and by his ceaseless struggle against conventional religion, dogmatic science, and society's mechanical influence on the minds of its members. To make man more *conscious* of his acts, to show society its real motives and what it *is* feeling, and not cry out in admiration at what it pretends to feel—this has been the great novelist's aim in his delineation of Russia's life. Ever seeking the one truth—to arrive at men's thoughts and sensations under the daily pressure of life—never flinching from his exploration of the dark world of man's animalism and incessant self-deception, Tolstoy's *realism* in art is symbolical of our absorption in the world of fact, in the modern study of natural law, a study ultimately without loss of spirituality, nay, resulting in immense gain to the spiritual life. The *realism* of the great Russian's novels is, therefore, more in line with the modern tendency and outlook than is the general tendency of other schools of Continental literature. And Tolstoy must be finally looked on, not merely as *the conscience of the Russian world* revolting against the too heavy burden which the Russian people have now to bear in Holy Russia's onward march towards the building-up of her great Asiatic Empire, but also as the soul of the modern world seeking to replace in its love of humanity the life of those old religions which science is destroying day by day. In this sense Tolstoy will stand in European literature as the conscience of the modern world.

EDWARD GARNETT.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Count Tolstoy
see Frontispiece

Lyeff Nikolaevitch Tolstoy was born at Yasnaya Polyana on August 28th (September 9th new style), 1828. His father, Count Nicholas Tolstoy, was a member of the old Russian nobility. In 1813, after the siege of Erfurt, he was taken prisoner by the French and afterwards retired from the army holding the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Having assumed the burden of many family debts, he succeeded in paying his creditors in full, thus gaining a reputation for unflinching perseverance. Tolstoy has described his character in "Childhood and Youth." "He was a man of the last century," he wrote, "and, like all his contemporaries, he had in him something chivalrous, enterprising, self-possessed, amiable, a passion for pleasure. . . . His life was so full of all kinds of impulse that he had no time to think about convictions; and besides, he had been so happy all his life that he did not feel it necessary to do so." His father died before Tolstoy reached the age of ten years, seven years after the death of his mother, of whom he wrote: "When I try to recall to mind my mother as she was then, only her brown eyes arise before me, always the same look of love and kindness in them. If during the most trying moments of my life I could have caught a glimpse of her smile, I should not have known what grief is."

**Tolstoy in his
Student days**
see page 2

Tolstoy's early years were passed in the country on the old-fashioned Russian estate, which resembled somewhat in patriarchal habits, aristocratic manners, democratic familiarity, shiftlessness, and superstition, a Southern Plantation in the days of slavery. After the death of his father in 1837 the family was taken charge of by an aunt, the Countess Alexandra Osten-Saken, and three years later by relatives of his mother who lived at Kazan. In 1843 Tolstoy entered the University of Kazan, where "Impervious to the ambitions of scholarship and research, unimpressed by the provincial aristocracy, too nice to enjoy the rough revels of the students, and repelled alike from aristocrats, professors, and students by an unsocial and what, with our English emphasis on government, we should call an unregulated disposition, he seems to have had during these two or three years a thoroughly unhappy and unprofitable experience."¹ Having left the University in 1846 without graduating he returned to the old country home. Yasnaya Polyana descended to Tolstoy from his mother. The estate, which covers an area of some 2,500 acres, partly arable and partly wooded, lies a hundred miles due south of Moscow. It was at one time Tolstoy's intention to dispossess himself entirely of his property and live as a peasant. Instead of this, however, he has made over the whole of the land to his wife and children, and lives in the house nominally as a guest.

Yasnaya Polyana
see page 3

**The Gateway to
Yasnaya Polyana**
see page 5

At the entrance to the park are two towers, medieval in style, which were erected by Tolstoy's maternal grandfather. From them the road runs through the park, rising as it approaches the house, and becomes merged in a level avenue of birch trees. Glimpses of a pond are caught through the dense foliage and of a square smoothly rolled space used as a tennis-ground, the game being one in which Count Tolstoy participates with great enjoyment. It will be noticed that in the photograph on page 31 he is holding a tennis racket in his hand.

**The Approach
to the Park**
see page 4

The house itself is a plain white rectangular two-storied building of stuccoed brick, and it would be hard to imagine a simpler and less pretentious place than the home in which Tolstoy has spent the greater part of his life. It boasts neither piazzas nor towers; indeed, no architectural ornaments of any kind, nor are vines or other creepers trained upon the flat walls to relieve their striking whiteness or soften their rectangular outlines. The house was not completed all at once, but was enlarged in proportion to the needs of the family. On one side, devoid of windows, there is a low porch, near which stands an old elm tree, called "The Tree of the Poor." (Close to its trunk is

**"The Tree of the
Poor"**
see page 7

¹ "Leo Tolstoy," by G. H. Perris.

a bench on which the peasants sit to await the coming of Count Tolstoy. Here he listens with unwearying patience to many stories of distress and difficulty, and gives in return, not only sympathy and advice, but such material assistance as may lie at his command.

It was during the period following upon his University career that Tolstoy threw all his energies into the task of raising both the economical and moral standard of peasant life, and suffered much disappointment at the hands of the peasants, who refused to allow him to pull down their dilapidated hovels even that he might erect new and convenient ones at his own cost. The result was that Tolstoy left Yasnaya Polyana for St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1847; resolved to prosecute his studies with the intention of taking a degree in law. With this choice of a career, however, he was dissatisfied, and returned again to his estate in 1848.

For a few years he lived the ordinary life of the Russian nobleman, enlisting at the age of 23 as cadet in a regiment of artillery in which his elder brother Nicholas was captain. Discontented with the idle life he was leading and out of harmony with his gay surroundings, he decided to jot down his recollections of the home and he loved so well, and it was at this time that he commenced writing "Childhood and Youth" (which, however, was not published in its complete form until six years later) and "The Cossacks."

Subsequently Tolstoy was appointed to a post on Prince Gortchakoff's staff in Turkey, and was present at Sevastopol in 1855, having attained the rank of divisional commander. His experiences during the war are pictured in his three sketches, "Sevastopol in December 1854," "In May 1855," and "In August 1855." These were published the following year and at once made his literary reputation. At the end of the campaign he left the army and visited Western Europe, in order to study various school systems, and upon his return to Yasnaya Polyana he established several schools of his own.

In September 1862 Tolstoy married Sophia Andreevna Behrs, the daughter of a military doctor. He was at this time thirty-four years of age, his bride being sixteen years younger. Miss Behrs was not only beautiful, she was an exceedingly cultured girl, having passed various examinations at the Moscow University. According to her brother, the manner of their courtship was practically identical with that of Levin and Kitty in "Anna Karenina." Countess Tolstoy at the age of forty-eight is described by Sergeyenko in "How Count Tolstoy Lives and Works," as having "An open, expressive countenance, with vivacious, fearless eyes, which she constantly brings near to the objects at which she is looking. At her very first words one feels her straightforward nature. In her manner there is not even a shadow of truckling to suit the tone of any one whomsoever; her own individual note is always audible."

About the time of his marriage, Tolstoy was described as "a tall, wide-shouldered thin-waisted man, with a moustache, but without a beard, with a serious, even a gloomy expression of face, which, however, was softened by a gleam of kindness whenever he smiled."

Living at Yasnaya Polyana winter and summer, with but rare intervening visits to Moscow, Tolstoy interested himself in all the practical details of farming. Probably his own experiences of the physical labour of mowing are depicted as those of Levin in "Anna Karenina." "The work went on and on. Levin absolutely lost all idea of time, and did not know whether it was early or late. Though the sweat stood on his face, and dropped from his nose, and all his back was wet as though he had been plunged in water, still he felt very well. His work now seemed to him full of pleasure. It was a state of unconsciousness: he did not know what he was doing, or how much he was doing, or how the hours and moments were flying, but only felt that at this time his work was good."

Tolstoy as an Officer

see page 1

Count Tolstoy and his wife

see page 8

Count Tolstoy at work in the fields

see page 10

Tolstoy was also an enthusiastic sportsman—a diversion which occasioned him two serious accidents—and, in addition to fulfilling the duties of a Justice of the Peace, he set himself to grapple with the novel conditions of land-owning, a complicated and arduous task to which he applied himself with characteristic energy and shrewdness. Indeed, his interests were manifold and exacting. Yet during this busy period he by no means neglected his literary work. The composition of his novel "War and Peace" began immediately after his marriage, and extended over a period of eight years. His wife copied out the manuscript of this work no less than seven times as he altered and improved it. "War and Peace" was followed by "Anna Karénina," which was not completed until 1876.

In his method of working, Tolstoy may be likened to the old painters. Having settled upon a plan of work, and collected a large number of studies, he first makes a charcoal sketch, as it were, and writes rapidly without thinking of particulars. He then has a clean copy of the work made by his wife or one of his daughters, and this is again subjected to careful remodelling. It is still in the nature of a charcoal sketch. The MS. is speedily covered with erasures and interpolations. Whole sentences replace others. The work is then copied again, and some chapters Tolstoy writes more than ten times. He usually writes on quarto sheets of cheap plain paper in a large involved hand, and sometimes covers as many as twenty pages in one day. He regards the interval between nine o'clock and three as the best time for work.

His study at Yasnaya Polyana is a small room with an uncarpeted floor, a vaulted ceiling, and thick stone walls. Formerly it was a store-room, and on the ceiling are heavy black iron rings, on which hams used to hang, and which were used later for gymnastic exercises. The study is very cool and quiet, and contains various implements of labour, such as a scythe, a saw, pincers, files, etc.

After his morning labours, Tolstoy generally goes out, often riding on horseback or on his bicycle, according to the state of the weather. He is a strict vegetarian, eating only the simplest food and avoiding all stimulants. He long ago ceased to smoke. Attaching great importance to manual labour, he takes a share in the housework, lighting his own fire and carrying water. At one time he learned bootmaking, and it is wonderful what an amount of physical exertion he was able to undergo at the age of seventy in the way of heavy labour in the field, of riding scores of versts on his bicycle, or of playing for hours at lawn tennis.

Tolstoy has always dressed extremely simply, and when at home his costume consisted of a grey flannel blouse, which in summer he exchanged for a canvas one of a very original cut, as may be judged from the fact that there was in the whole district only one old woman who could make it according to his orders. In this blouse Tolstoy sat for his portrait to Kramsky and Répin, the painters. His over-dress was composed of a caftan and half-shouba, made of the simplest materials, and, like the blouse, eccentric in their cut, being made evidently not for show but to stand bad weather. The Hon. Ernest Howard Crosby has given an interesting description of Count Tolstoy's appearance. "He is dressed like a peasant in a grey-white blouse of thin, coarse, canvas-like material, with a leather belt; but his toilet differs from a peasant's in being scrupulously clean. His features are irregular and plain, and yet his figure is so strong and massive that the *tout ensemble* is striking and fine-looking. His little blue eyes peer out from under his bushy eyebrows with the kindest of expressions."

Count and Countess Tolstoy have had fifteen children of whom only seven survived. The system of their upbringing has been fully dealt with by M. C. A. Behrs in his "Recollections of Count Leo Tolstoy." Toys and playthings were rigorously banished from the nursery. With the first child the trial was made to dispense altogether with a nurse. But later it was thought

Facsimile of a portion of Tolstoy's MS.

see page 11

Tolstoy at work in his study at Yasnaya Polyana

see page 13

Tolstoy with his bicycle

see page 6

A portrait of Tolstoy

see page 16

Tolstoy in the grounds of Yasnaya Polyana

see page 24

Count Tolstoy and his family

see page 31

well to yield to the requirements of their social position and to the habits of contemporary life, and the children were put under the care of nurses, ~~bonnes~~ and governesses. The parents, however, exercised a strict and unremitting surveillance over both the children and those who had the care of them.

The greatest possible liberty was allowed to the children, and all put in authority over them were strictly forbidden to have resort under any pretext to violent or severe punishments.

Tolstoy believed that these principles were nowhere so generally accepted as in England, and, accordingly, from their third to their ninth year, the children were placed under the charge of young English governesses engaged directly from London.

Countess Tolstoy is an excellent housewife, attentive and hospitable. All the complicated and troublesome management of the housekeeping and direction of household affairs is under her charge. She is indefatigable, and brings her brisk energy, thriftiness, and activity to bear in every direction, and this she does without help. Her three eldest sons live apart, each occupied with his own business matters. Her daughters have their own interests and duties, which take up the greater part of their time.

Tolstoy's eldest daughter, Tatyana Lvovna, a girl of exceptional talent, in particular works very hard. In addition to copying much of her father's manuscript, she conducts his vast correspondence, consisting of an almost incredible number of letters received in all languages from every part of the globe.

This is probably the most striking of all the portraits of Count Tolstoy, representing him when at the height of his popularity and power. In 1884 he was at work on the Popular Tales and Sketches which sold by millions throughout Russia, and from which we reproduce two or three illustrations—viz., one by H. R. Millar from the English edition of "What Men Live By," written in 1881; another by the same artist from the English edition of "Where Love is there God is also," and a third showing the cover of this tract, which was written in 1885, and issued in rough pamphlet form at the price of a few farthings.

During the last twenty years Tolstoy has written the following books:—"My Confession," "A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology," which has never been translated, "The Four Gospels, Harmonized and Translated," "What I Believe," "The Gospel in Brief," "What to Do," "On Life" (also called "Life"), "The Kreutzer Sonata," "The Kingdom of God is Within You," "The Christian Teaching," "What is Art?" which in Tolstoy's own opinion is the best constructed of his books, "Resurrection," his last novel, begun about 1894, and then laid aside in favour of what seemed more important work to be completely rewritten and published in 1899 for the benefit of the Doukhobors, and latterly "What is Religion and what is Its Essence," published in February 1902. The illustrations reproduced from "Resurrection" on pages 19, 29, and 34 are from the remarkable drawings by Pasternak. Concerning these pictures there is an interesting note in the preface of the French edition of the novel from which it may be gathered that the drawings tallied very closely with Tolstoy's own conception of the appearance of his characters. It was the artist's usual custom to submit each design on its completion to the eminent novelist for his opinion. Invariably Tolstoy showed his approval of the clever realisation of his ideas. But when it came to the sketch of Prince Nekhludov, Tolstoy went so far as to enquire of M. Pasternak whether he was acquainted with the person who had served him as a model. At this the artist showed extreme surprise—he had not even been aware that the character was copied from an original.

**Count Tolstoy,
his wife, and
daughters**

see page 12

**Tolstoy and his
eldest daughter
Tatyana**

see page 30

**Leo Tolstoy, from
a portrait
painted in 1884**

see page 33

**Illustrations by
H. R. Millar to
"What Men Live
By"**

see page 25

**—and to "Where
Love is there God
is also"**

see page 15

**Cover of "Where
Love is there God
is also"**

see page 20

**Pasternak's
illustrations to
"Resurrection"**

*see pages 19, 29
and 34*

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